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ABSTRACT

Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) Trends are analyses of higher education literature contained in the ERIC database, describing major concerns in institutional practice. A large percentage of the literature from 1999-2000 on administration describes the common themes of presidential leadership, leadership/management styles, administrator stress and role confusion, lack of training for administrators, and surveys of staff or faculty in different positions examining role alteration. Important trends reflected in the literature on administration include: (1) management fads; (2) commercialization; (3) privatization; (4) determining priorities; (5) human interaction; (6) mediation; (7) planning; (8) legal issues; (9) diversity; (10) assessment; (11) technology; and (12) collaboration. These trends demonstrate the need to reconcile corporate and academic values. Performance assessment, planning, and legal issues reflect the rise of corporate values, whereas human interaction, diversity, collaboration, and mediation represent the traditional values of the academy. The current literature on administration reflects an attempt to blend these values. Although there is a significant amount of literature discussing these themes, little, if any, research has been conducted on the impact of blending these values or on strategies for resolving tensions. The administration of the university has become the seat of the battle over what the university of the 21st century will look like. (Contains 31 references.) (EMS)

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ERIC TRENDS 1999-2000:

ADMINISTRATION

by Adrianna J. Kezar

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What are ERIC Trends?

Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) Trends are analyses of higher education literature contained in the ERIC Database. These analyses describe major concerns in institutional practice, helping researchers identify new areas for research, areas where further understanding is needed, and any gaps in the literature. For practitioners, ERIC Trends place individual institutional shifts in practice into a larger context. They provide individual institutions with examples of other institutions that are trying to make the same changes and help institutions identify other areas they should consider for change.

Slightly more than half of the literature summarized in ERIC Trends is drawn from higher education journals. The remainder of the literature summarized includes conference papers and documents published by educational associations, institutional research offices, research centers, consortia, and state and federal associations and boards. The literature is produced by both the research and practice communities. It is a combination of current theory and research, such as conference papers and Internet documents, and more dated literature, such as books and journal articles, which take several years to evolve from acceptance to publication. A limitation of this analysis is that it relies on the literature ERIC is able to obtain from authors and organizations; some groups may be unwilling to share information and, therefore, are not represented in the analysis. The range of documents analyzed in the ERIC Trends is fairly comprehensive, however.

To retrieve the literature for analysis, all of the higher education literature in the ERIC database was searched by the ERIC descriptors that reflect the most important topics in higher education: college faculty; college students (including foreign students); finance; college instruction (including academic advising); curriculum; program evaluation; policy and governance; legal issues; professional development; college administration (including educational facilities); higher education and the public good; and professional and graduate education. A quantitative analysis compared the current number of documents within a particular category to earlier years (back to 1986). A qualitative analysis of content was conducted on ERIC abstracts to identify recurring themes.

Higher Education Trends (1999-2000): Administration

by Adrianna J. Kezar

Similar to previous years, a large percentage of the literature on administration describes the common themes of presidential leadership, leadership/management styles, administrator stress and role confusion, lack of training for administrators, and surveys of staff or faculty in different positions examining role alteration (Allen, G.). In addition, there are many general books and articles on being a department chair, dean, or student affairs officer, etc. There is a significant amount of existing information on all these themes. Meta-analysis of this rich body of research is needed. Researchers were less likely to examine the key challenges that confront administration; this proves disappointing for educators who need information to address daily crises.

There were several important trends reflected in the literature on administration including:

1. Management fads
2. Commercialization
3. Privatization
4. Determining priorities
5. Human interaction
6. Mediation
7. Planning
8. Legal issues
9. Diversity
10. Assessment
11. Technology
12. Collaboration.

A major tension is reflected within these themes -- the need to reconcile corporate and academic values. The administration of the university has become the seat of the battle over what the university of the 21st century will look like. Performance assessment, planning, and legal issues reflect the rise of corporate values, whereas human interaction, diversity, collaboration, and mediation represent the traditional values of the academy. The literature reflects an attempt to blend these disparate values. Research is needed on this values tension. Although many commentators write on the topic and some very strong philosophical pieces have been written, little, if any, research has been conducted on the impact of this tension or on strategies for resolving it.

Management Fads & Corporate Values

After nearly a decade of management fads such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Right-sizing, and Re-engineering, many researchers and professionals question the ability of these practices for improving higher education administration (Birnbaum, R., & Deshotels, J.). One comprehensive essay discusses changes in higher education management over the last several decades. It notes that since the 1950s higher education has witnessed many fads in institutional

management, from management by technique to management by style to management by process. It is argued that, to some extent, TQM is a distraction from other principles important to higher education, namely access, equity, autonomy, and diversity (Fincher, C.).

Another work argues that corporate culture, power, and politics are dominating the discourse on the management of higher education. Presidents have become corporate managers and management has become increasingly focused on accountability. Universities increasingly model themselves after corporations; the cost-accounting principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control of the corporate order have restructured the meaning and purpose of education. This corporate discourse lacks a more basic examination of the nature of knowledge, the meaning and purpose of education, and of its relationship to democracy as core questions that should underlie managerial decisions (Giroux, H. A.). The conflict between academic values or traditions and corporate values or ethics is reaching a high point. This also relates to the second trend of commercialization.

Commercialization

A major trend in this environment of corporate control and management fads is the drive toward commercialization. Certification programs and distance education are enticing universities to become more entrepreneurial and to enter new markets. Many commentators offer advice on how to take advantage of entrpreneurial opportunities without becoming excessively commercial. Others offer a distinctly commercial perspective; for example, one article offers a framework for college planning, incorporating three critical components: strategic guidelines and program development parameters; rigorous business planning process; and rapid evaluation/decision- making process (Blustain, H., Goldstein, P., & Lozier, G.). Most universities realize the need to adapt and use technological innovation and to tap into new markets that may be able to subsidize "traditional" education. But balancing the two values systems is impacting the culture of the academy.

Even more dramatic than the impact of corporate values is corporate-college alliances. For example, as government support for universities in Canada has declined, the role of corporations has expanded, resulting in increased dependence on private funds. Many professors decry the increasing pressures to mold academic efforts toward commercial interests (Desruisseaux, P.). Educators struggle with how to add commercial innovation to the traditional university mission, attempting to balancing these values systems. Corporate-college alliances and the growth of certification are not well understood and researched. This area needs to be responded to quickly as this change is occurring rapidly, with little data to inform decisionmaking.

Privatization

In the last set of ERIC Trends on Administration (1997-1999), privatization was an emerging trend. It continues to be a major theme with student housing, developmental (remedial) education, and management information systems becoming growing areas. It is not surprising that out- sourcing is gaining momentum with the focus on adopting corporate strategies. Many resources examine the institutional movement toward outsourcing support services, focusing on the development of outcome-oriented performance indicators and continuous self-assessment.

Most of the literature notes that outsourcing has been generally positive for most higher education institutions (van der Werf, M.). This appears to be one of the few management techniques that has been translated with success to higher education. One comprehensive resource examined 125 "lessons" based on support service theories, philosophies, and practices at George Mason University (Virginia), which collectively are termed "blended management." The book attempts to demystify outsourcing, help institutions cultivate a "culture of change," and show how George Mason staff and its outsourcing partners have improved services at the university (Scherrens, M. W.). More research on promising practices, such as this study, are needed.

Determining Priorities

Attempting to balance the competing academic and corporate values is also related to the theme of determining priorities. The growing and competing sets of values (and accompanying initiatives) impacting the academy make it necessary to establish priorities. The corporate values and drive toward commercialization are exacerbated by legislatures that demand universities be more strongly involved with transforming schools, community problems, and workforce development. One helpful book offers a conceptual framework and a set of processes for clarifying institutional purpose and setting academic priorities. It builds on the author's experience as a university president, and engages the academic community in choosing among competing demands for financial and physical resources (Dickeson, R. C.). This type of leadership will become increasingly important as institutions have become stretched beyond their means.Research to support better decision-making within an environment of competing demands is needed.

The Human and Integrity Issues

Throughout this trend analysis, values have been noted many times. Not only values, but integrity, ethics, and the human dimension are paramount in a time of technological revolution. With more critics noting the bureaucratization of the academy, many educators worry that traditional functions of the academy will languish. They are concerned that traditional values that have supported higher education institutions for centuries will not shape the future. A model for a university of the future that balances the traditional functions with new demands, called the universal university, is proposed in one article. The universal university must have universal access; universal delivery; a vocation to educate, not just train; a watchtower function; a universal ethical role; solidarity with sister institutions and society; autonomy with accountability; universal quality standards (Mayor, F.). To many this may sound like the traditional university, but it does entail a blending of values.

Many of the discussions were not as theoretical or abstract as in the Mayor article; others examined day to day ethical dilemmas. For example, one article offers principles for resolving ethical dilemmas in college alumni relations, based on a theory of decision-making using four ethical dilemma paradigms (truth vs. loyalty, individual vs. community, justice vs. mercy, short-term vs. long-term). Practitioners are urged to use quiet moments to reflect on and discuss ethical issues among the staff (Jarrell, A.) This article has implications for all types of functional areas, not just alumni relations. There were many different articles and books about ethical decision-

making, integrity within the workplace, conflict resolution, values, and focusing on the human dimension of the workplace (Evans, G.R.). Professional educators need more resources on ethics in order to handle the many conflicting values situations that are emerging.

Conflict Management

Within an environment of competing values, it is not surprising that conflict management emerged as a trend. In the ERIC Trend on Governance & Policy, it is noted that shared governance is in jeopardy and that faculty voices are being lost in the management of institutions. Increasing corporatization and unionization are leading to a growing need for conflict management. Although the academy has always been a political environment, it is becoming increasingly political (yet certainly not rivaling earlier time periods such as the 1960s). Some helpful resources are now available, including one that examines erroneous assumptions inherent in traditional reaction patterns. It also considers key elements of planning for conflict prevention and some workplace strategies to help minimize conflicts. Several approaches to conflict management, and their outcomes, are highlighted, and stages of conflict resolution process are presented with alternatives for resolving progressive levels of conflict in the work environment (Brewer, E. W.). Administrators and faculty need to become more adept at conflict management within the new environment so that appropriate decisions can be made and governance redeveloped. If conflict management strategies are not successful, students will be the ones who lose as more unionization occurs and the collective expertise of the university is no longer tapped into for decision-making.

Planning

Much of the literature continues to focus on the importance of formal planning processes. Although most authors believe in the importance of planning, as do most administrators, the difficulty of planning within the university or college environment is always noted. One helpful survey of administrators at nine research universities elicited information about the use, benefits, and problems of strategic planning and other decision-making and evaluative processes, and techniques for perpetuating the spirit of planning within the organization (Taylor, A. L., & Karr, S.).

Attention is given to the value of innovative approaches to planning since, so often, traditional planning models from the corporate sector do not work (Taylor, A. L., & Karr, S.). For example, one study examined whether strategic planning enhanced a higher education institution's fiscal condition. It also systematically evaluated the extent of institution-wide strategic planning among private four-year postsecondary institutions in the United States. The study found no significant differences between the fiscal condition of institutions before and after planning began, between planners and non-planners, nor between minimal and intensive planners. On average, more positive (though not statistically significant) change in fiscal condition was experienced by the non-planning institutions (Swenk, J. M.). These types of results remind us there needs to be research to develop more effective planning models that are specific to higher education.

Legal Issues

In the ERIC Trends on Students, it is noted that disciplinary issues are on the rise and that more attention is now being placed to ethical issues. In the ERIC Faculty Trends, the increase in legal challenges, as a result of tenure decisions, is discussed. As a consequence of student and faculty situations and other legal issues (intellectual property), administrators are inundated with legal issues (Liddell, J.). The literature mentions the challenges within the new technology environment, such as maintaining privacy. Lapses in security, types of information needing protection, liability under federal laws, other relevant laws and pending legislation, ethics, and policy implementation in the electronic age are discussed in many resources (Cranman, K. A.). Institutions need to consider the implications of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act for fair use exemptions and the competing interests of content providers and educators (Gasaway, L. N.).

Community service learning and experiential learning opportunities, where students go out into the community and workplace, are also posing legal challenges. One article examines liability incurred by university-sponsored information technology internships and consulting relationships with the business community. In these outreach engagements, the university takes the role of primary insurer for the business client and provides an indemnity shield for the university's representatives. As the number of engagements increases, so does the school's liability. Formalizing these relationships with written contracts is recommended (Peak, D. A., & O'Hara, M. J.). Legal research has long been an area with minimal inquiry in higher education. This remains an important area for research to address these many administrative challenges.

Diversity

Research on diversity focuses on advancing people of color and women into administrative positions. There has been a plethora of research in this area in the last five years; more meta-analysis and synthesis is needed. An example of the many models for increasing the diversity of the administration, staff, faculty, and students of higher education institutions is a study of metropolitan universities. They are in the forefront of developing new administrative approaches to support and expand minority opportunities in higher education. Three design principles are at the heart of successful efforts to institutionalize diversity: strategic planning; the learning model; and integration across goals and functions. The experience of the University of Texas at San Antonio illustrates these principles (Kirkpatrick, S. A., & Van Natta, C.). Another study examines administrators of colors' efforts, successes, and strategies for advancement (Harvey, W. B.). A few studies push the agenda forward by examining new and important issues such as why diversity efforts are not institutionalized. This is an area in need of research in the future.

Assessment

Assessment has been a major trend for over ten years. It was noted on the ERIC Trends on Governance & Policy that assessment is now being discussed less, possibly reflecting its integration into the culture of the academy. Research continues to fine-tune assessment practice. One study illustrates this integration, by presenting the results of a national survey of college presidents' assessment policies and practices and describes a "typical" presidential assessment process constructed from the most frequent survey responses. The survey was responded to by 1,348 presidents and 571 board chairs (Schwartz, M. P.). There were many other studies demonstrating the widespread use of assessment. Some studies also illustrated that the results of

assessment are not necessarily being used for improvement or decision-making, but are used mostly for compliance. The next emphasis needs to be on not merely advocating assessment, but on using the results effectively.

Technology

Perhaps one of the most discussed trends in the literature on management was technology. Technology was important to advancing the purposes of almost every aspect of administration from campus "tours" offered online with 360-degree views, live video, animation, talking tour guides, interactive maps with photographic links, and detailed information about buildings, departments, and programs (Jarrell, A.) to "one-stop shopping" models of student services (Dauphinais, P. R.) to enhanced library services and availability of classroom resources and texts on-line (Lide, C.). Better use of technology is being shown to have many positive outcomes including increased student enrollment/retention and institutional reputation. Students benefit through better academic advising and counseling (Dauphinais, P. R.).

Although this was a major trend in practitioner journals and the non-research literature, few higher education researchers are examining this topic. In order to obtain information for technology integration, many educators are looking to the corporate literature. For example, one article identifies four trends in corporate information technology and applies them to the academic workplace and institutional research. Trends are: (1) knowledge management, (2) enterprise resource planning, (3) data warehousing, and (4) electronic commerce (Chan, Susy S.). Many commentators criticize the poor or inappropriate way that most colleges and universities are integrating technology by simply "bolting it" on, costing more money than needed, rather than restructuring their structure and processes. Others note that if American colleges and universities are to become contemporary and effective organizations, their strategic academic technology agenda should be focused on production of intelligence rather than on storage and recall of random and quickly outmoded information. Institutions must articulate a new approach based on new connections between contemporary notions of organizations, global issues, and technologies (Privateer, P. M.).

A major challenge for many universities is recruiting, retaining, and retraining college and university information technology (IT) staff. This also results in many institutions outsourcing this function since, with the salaries offered by universities, they can not compete (West, A.). Some suggestions for leveling the playing field include capitalizing on workers' desires for professional development opportunities; using the appeal of the institution's mission; redesigning computer support positions; and providing access to professional development activities, professional recognition, and intercollegiate cooperation (Hundley, S. P.)

Collaboration

Similar to planning, working in teams or committees has long been a trend in the literature of higher education administration. There were many articles on the importance of team or collaborative leadership to fully embrace the collective expertise in administrative decisions, similar to past years. But a rising trend was in the area of collaboration. The emphasis on working collaboratively within the administration also relates to the theme, noted in the ERIC

Trends on External Relations, of increased collaboration among sectors in society - - such as business or school systems.

Collaboration among different higher education institutions is also a major trend, especially around issues such as technology, where resource constraints encourage this type of complex collaboration. Another example is fund-raising activities among groups of colleges. Five Colleges, Inc., a consortium of five Massachusetts higher education institutions whose development efforts are limited to contracts and grants, is an example of this evolving trend of collaboration over competition. One article discusses the difficulties inherent in cooperative fund-raising, including competition for foundation resources, the credibility of consortia in light of their limited fund-raising history, and successful stewardship of the resources obtained (Peterson, L. M.) Also, colleges are taking advantages of cooperative purchasing activities with other, similar institutions to control costs. Guiding principles for effective efforts include sharing the risk, sharing the resources, providing services to other institutions, and expanding institutional bargaining power through cooperation. A final example, the North Suburban Higher Education Consortium, a regional consortium in metropolitan Chicago (Illinois), illustrates how sharing technological resources can advance state educational technology initiatives. Begun as a modest effort to coordinate academic programs, the consortium has evolved into a complex system for the funding and use of technology at six institutions (Scheerens, M.).

Conclusion

There are also several areas where there exists an alarming need among practitioners or an area of crisis that needs attention, but little research has been conducted. The condition of university hospitals seems to be an important dilemma that is not being studied by higher education researchers. Many academic health centers are struggling to survive; a large number are merging with for-profit chains or declaring bankruptcy. Also, with more attention to crime, alcohol, and drugs on campus, we need better data about whether rates of incidence or usage are rising as it appears, or if enforcement is merely making the issue more prevalent. Student affairs professionals do not have accurate information to make decisions (Gehring, D. D., & Callaway, R. L.). The need for research on technology, legal issues, conflict management, commercialization, certification, and prioritization has already been noted.

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